

**The Joint Painting Procedure as an Intervention to Increase Communication And  
Emotional Expression Between Latina Mothers and Their Adolescents**

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Therapy and Counseling (MAATC)

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DATE: February 16, 2024

TO: Stephanie Herrera  
FROM: Albertus Magnus College Institutional Review Board  
PROJECT TITLE: The Joint Painting Procedure as an Intervention to Increase Communication and Emotional Expression between Latina Mothers and their Adolescents.  
IRB ID Number: 202324-008

SUBMISSION TYPE: Revised  
DECISION: Approved  
ACTION: COMPLETE

Dear Stephanie Herrera:

The Albertus Magnus College Institutional Review Board (AMCIRB) by Full Board Review has considered the Revised submission for the project referenced above. Following this review, the AMCIRB has **Approved** this study, from 2/16/2024 to 2/16/2025.

Research activities (including screening, new recruitment, follow-up, and continued participation of enrolled participants) that have been approved may not be conducted beyond the expiration date stated above unless a continuation/renewal is requested and approved by the IRB.

If you have any questions, contact the AMCIRB at [irb@albertus.edu](mailto:irb@albertus.edu) . Please include your project title and IRB Project Number in all correspondence with the IRB.

This letter has been electronically signed in accordance with all applicable regulations, and a copy is retained within Albertus Magnus College Institutional Review Board's records.

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### **Abstract**

This present study focuses on the importance of emotional expression and communication in Latino families. It suggests that incorporating cultural competency training for clinicians is crucial to understanding communication patterns and emotional dynamics within different ethnic and cultural family structures. The study explored intergenerational disparities between parents and adolescents that negatively impact the emotional well-being of family members. The research explored family treatment strategies, particularly the Family Communication Pattern Theory (FCPT), to understand the connection between communication patterns and family health. Cultural diversity significantly influences communication patterns in Latino families, with collectivism, traditional gender roles, and hierarchical family responsibilities affecting communication. The study also examined the correlation between parents' acculturation levels and their emotional perspectives, highlighting the complexity of communication within these families. The main aim of this research is to test the hypothesis that implementing the JPP can increase communication and emotional expression in Latino mothers and their adolescents. The study emphasizes the importance of acknowledging cultural and emotional foundations in Latino families and addresses intergenerational differences in communication perceptions. The findings from this research have the potential to inform therapeutic practices, contribute to the understanding of culturally sensitive interventions, and ultimately enhance the well-being of Latino families.

### **The Joint Painting Procedure as an Intervention to Increase Communication And Emotional Expression Between Latina Mothers and Their Adolescents**

Emotional expression and effective communication are critical for family dynamics, individual growth, and general well-being. In particular, Latin families place high cultural value on communication and emotional expression in family relationships (Campos & Kim, 2017; Zambrana, 1995). To promote health in all families, best practices for clinicians should include cultural competency and sensitivity training (McNaughton et al., 2014); research in the areas of culture-based communication patterns and emotional expression with various ethnic and cultural family patterns is essential (Arias & Punyanunt-Carter, 2017). Arts-based interventions may be especially effective in their cultural adaptability and capacity for non-verbal expression (Gavron & Mayseless, 2018).

Effective communication is an essential component of family dynamics and the development of emotional well-being. Intergenerational disparities in communication perceptions are common within families, especially between children and parents (Barnes & Olson, 1985; Branje, 2008).

Varying communication styles may be due to a generational divide, variations in perspective, and adolescent developmental shifts (Wu & Chao, 2011; Zapf et al., 2023). Teenagers, for instance, may argue with their parents regarding communication, control, and decision-making because they want greater freedom and autonomy (Barnes & Olson, 1985; Branje, 2008). Teenagers may see their parents as interfering as a result of this shift in perspective, most likely there will be less communication and more conflict. According to Ochoa et al. (2021), teens with parents who struggle with communication may not be able to convey to

them what is appropriate and inappropriate behavior, which could cause the adolescent to externalize actions. Moreover, if there is a breakdown in communication between parents and adolescents, adolescent may not be able to speak with their parents in an effective manner or get the help they need in the event of interpersonal conflict.

Parent-child relationships change over time due to intergenerational changes in communication views and, simultaneously, across the span of a child's development. Parents may struggle with developing new parenting strategies different from how they were parented (Calzada et al., 2010). At the same time, teenagers' relationships with their parents may change as they mature and become more self-reliant. Teens may feel a need for more privacy and personal space, resulting in less transparency in communication. These family dynamics are a normal part of development across the lifespan as a person individuates and separates from their family (Barnes & Olson, 1985; Roche et al., 2019).

The family is the foundation of human society, and effective family communication is critical to its functioning. Healthy family communication styles promote the cohesiveness, flexibility, and emotional health of families (Henderson et al., 2022; Jiao et al., 2022). The Family Communication Pattern Theory (FCPT), proposed by Jiao et al. (2022), provides a helpful framework for understanding the connection between family communication patterns and family health. Family Communication Pattern Theory is based on the categorization of communication patterns into different types, including consensual, pluralistic, open, and closed. In a family, these communication patterns determine how decisions are made, information is communicated, and feelings are expressed (Henderson et al., 2022; Jiao et al., 2022).

According to the family communication patterns theory (Hurst et al., 2021), there are two main communication dimensions: conformity orientation, which is concerned with children

adhering to the same attitudes, beliefs, and values as their parents, and conversation orientation, which indicates open and free communication about a wider range of topics. Young adults are more likely to acquire trait autonomy in an environment of support when there is an open exchange of ideas and opinions, which is typified by open communication patterns. On the other hand, a lack of emotional expressiveness and openness in restricted communication styles can impede the growth of individuality and add to familial strain (Jiao et al., 2022).

Understanding family communication patterns is critical because they have a significant impact on the well-being and development of family members. Effective communication patterns help young adults develop attributes like autonomy, independence, and self-expression. On the other hand poor communication patterns can lead to misunderstandings, conflicts, and emotional distress, eventually weakening family health and cohesion (Hurst et al., 2021; Jiao et al., 2022).

Zámbrana (1995) notes that Latino families in the US differ greatly from traditional models in their family structures and communication patterns. There are many different types of family configurations, ranging from multigenerational extended families to households headed by single mothers or fathers. Levels of acculturation, immigration trends, and historical background all impact these systems (Zambrana, 1995).

Communication techniques are shaped by cultural values that are strongly ingrained in Latino ancestry. Collectivism promotes connection and has an impact on communication by placing a strong emphasis on the family and community. Significant meaning is conveyed by nonverbal cues, which are consistent with collectivist principles. Communication patterns are influenced by traditional gender roles, respect for authority, and hierarchical family responsibilities (Knight et al., 2011; Zambrana, 1995). According to research findings (Nadeem et al., 2007), Latino parents' distinct parenting objectives have an impact on their ability to raise

their children positively. They tend to give less individual praise and participate in less egalitarian parent-adolescent interactions. Family members are trained not to put oneself first in a collectivistic parenting style, which is consistent with the above. Since they believe in teaching good manners and moral values, Latino parents may also report higher degrees of controlling behaviors from their children. This shows that parent-report questionnaires that are based on the socialization objectives of European-American parents can be missing important aspects of Latino culture's ideal parenting (Nadeem et al., 2007).

It is essential that academics, lawmakers, and professionals who engage with Latino families acknowledge cultural diversity. Understanding their particular advantages and barriers to supporting resources is crucial (Holland & Courtney, 1998; McNaughton et al., 2014). Research has shown that providing communication interventions for Latin mothers and their children as early as primary school, with a focus on Latina mothers and their children, can improve emotional expression and reduce family disputes (McNaughton et al., 2014).

Latina families have unique communication patterns based on their norms and beliefs. Latino parents make unilateral decisions affecting their adolescents, expecting them to conform to parental guidelines and assist their parents and siblings. Research shows that mothers are more likely to communicate with their children in urban Latino families, and some Latinas view motherhood as a rewarding role (Guilamo-Ramos et al., 2007; McNaughton et al., 2014).

Family communication is inextricably tied to the development of children's emotional expressiveness (Perez et al., 2011). The emotional discourse within Latino families is heavily influenced by their parents' acculturation and attitudes about emotions. Parents' ideas about emotions include cultural values, attitudes, and conventions about expressing, handling, and understanding emotions (Perez et al., 2011).



The way parents talk and resolve emotions with their preschool-age children directly impacts the children's emotional understanding (Perez et al., 2011). The emotional and behavioral health of Latino teenagers can be severely impacted by cultural stressors, which may have an effect on their relationships and guidance. It is critical to comprehend the variables behind these problems since research indicates that parental cultural stress can severely affect the emotional and behavioral health of their children as well as cause poor family functioning (Lorenzo-Blanco et al., 2016). Parents serve as emotional role models for their children, shaping how they perceive, express, and control their own emotions. Furthermore, culturally sensitive emotional understanding is crucial in this situation (Perez et al., 2011).

For example, Mexican immigrant and Mexican American families frequently use explanatory emotion talk to comprehend and explain their emotions. This type of communication acts as a bridge for family members to communicate their sentiments, especially when dealing with challenges and experiences that provoke intense emotional responses (Cervantes, 2002). An example would be a Mexican American family who is experiencing financial strain and job loss may talk about their feelings over dinner, supporting one another and making plans for a brighter future by being open with one another.

Perez, Rivera, & Dunsmore (2011) found that more acculturated parents have distinct emotional views and communication patterns than less acculturated parents. *Acculturation* describes the level of assimilation into a dominant culture and researchers believe that these levels are directly related to how parents approach emotional exchanges with their children. In addition, to how much they incorporate cultural values and standards into these discussions. For example, in a first-generation Hispanic household, parents who are more acculturated to mainstream American culture may encourage individual expression and open conversations

about feelings with their children. In contrast, less acculturated and entrenched in traditional beliefs, immigrant grandparents may approach emotional talks more conservatively, stressing collaborative well-being and conformity to cultural standards. This disparity in acculturation degrees might result in different emotional perspectives and communication patterns within the family.

Family art therapy is a dynamic and unique technique that uses the power of creativity to help families communicate, connect, and express themselves emotionally. This treatment modality understands the complex interaction of emotions, thoughts, and connections within the family unit and uses creativity to address various difficulties and improve well-being. (Kerr, 2011; Kwiatkowska, 2001).

By strengthening communication among family members, family art therapy minimizes stigma and defensiveness in adults and children (Herman & Chilton, 2023). Offering a distinct, well-rounded procedure, art therapy offers families an efficient and unique treatment choice. Art is able to cross linguistic, cultural, and generational boundaries, which in turn affects the power dynamics and balance within families. Using art to engage the family levels the playing field and gives everyone a new platform for equal communication. Speaking a second language and coming from different cultural backgrounds where language may not be regarded all contribute to an imbalanced power differential in families. This is especially true for families with younger children (Gussak & Rosal, 2016).

Linesch et al. (2012) investigated art therapy as a technique for navigating the enormous impact of immigration on Latino families, acknowledging the emotional and cultural hurdles that come with adjusting to new circumstances. The exploration of the acculturation experience not only addresses the psychosocial challenges faced by immigrants but also holds significance for

the field of art therapy in clinical practice (Linesch et al., 2014). Art therapy was useful in promoting the expression of thoughts and emotions among family members, resulting in a new platform for expression and understanding. Specifically, art therapy was able to overcome language barriers and act as a bridge between generations in Latino households, encouraging intergenerational discourse on the topic of immigration (Linesch et al., 2012).

According to Gavron (2013), the Joint Painting Procedure (JPP) is an innovative therapy method intended to evaluate and improve parent-child interactions' emotional expression and communication. The JPP is a cooperative and artistic intervention in which the parent and child paint together and it can be useful as both a diagnostic tool and therapeutic intervention (Gavron, 2013). The procedure explores personal boundaries, shared space, and communication styles by using paint on a shared piece of paper. By encouraging the visual expression of ideas and feelings, this dynamic approach helps participants go beyond the constraints of spoken communication.

Facilitating nonverbal expressiveness in parent-child relationships is one of the JPP's main benefits (Gavron, 2013). The directive allows for a more direct and natural form of expression by giving parents and children a platform to connect without depending just on words. This is especially helpful when discussing delicate or complicated emotions because it is easier to communicate feelings directly and quickly through visual media. Moreover, the JPP encourages parents and children to share experiences (Gavron, 2013). When they work together on a creative project, their relationship and understanding grow stronger. As participants have insight into one another's distinct creative expressions and emotional experiences, this joint endeavor can promote empathy. It strengthens the link between the parent and child by encouraging a sense of unity and cooperation.

As previously stated, adolescence is a critical period for typically developing youth, making a strong parent-child relationship even more critical. The JPP serves as a powerful tool for understanding these relationships more deeply (Gavron et al., 2022; Gavron and Mayseless, 2018). Additionally, the opportunities for non-verbal expression through visual media lend themselves to a culturally informed approach to treatment.

In summary, diverse communication styles, generational disparities, and changes in adolescent development all have an impact on family communication, particularly that which occurs across generations (Wu & Chao, 2011; Zapf et al., 2023). Family treatment strategies emphasize the effects of conformity and conversation orientations on family dynamics. They are informed by the Family Communication Pattern Theory (FCPT) (Jiao et al., 2022). Cultural values such as collectivism and conventional gender roles influence the different structures and communication patterns found in Latino households (Knight et al., 2011; Zambrana, 1995). Parents' levels of acculturation also influence their emotional perspectives and communication styles (Perez et al., 2011; McNaughton et al., 2014). A dynamic and culturally aware approach is offered by incorporating art therapy into family communication (Gavron & Mayseless, 2018).

The Joint Painting Procedure (JPP) is a promising intervention for enhancing communication and emotional expression in Latina mother-child relationships. Effective communication is crucial for fostering healthy relationships and reducing conflicts. The JPP is an innovative therapy method that promotes collaborative art-making and non-verbal communication, addressing unique communication patterns and cultural influences in Latino families. It promotes empathy, understanding, and togetherness, especially among families facing challenges like intellectual disabilities. (Gavron, 2013; Gavron & Mayseless, 2018; Gavron et al., 2022).

The conducted research explored enhancing communication and emotional expression within Latina mother-child relationships through the Joint Parenting Project (JPP).

Acknowledging the cultural and emotional foundations of Latino families and addressing intergenerational communication differences, the study aimed to determine if the JPP could enhance communication and emotional expression in Latina mothers and their adolescents.

## **METHOD**

### **Participants:**

Participants in this study consisted of fourteen ( $n = 14$ ) mother-adolescent dyads. Parents' ages ranged from 18 to 54 years. All mothers identified as Latina/Hispanic. In terms of ethnicity, two parents identified as Mexican, two as Puerto Rican, one as Central American, and one as another ethnicity. Regarding prior experience with art, seven parents reported having experience, while seven did not. The adolescent participants were evenly split between the age groups of 12-14 and 15-17, also in gender identity with seven adolescents in each category of male and female. Snowball sampling was utilized to draw participants, with flyers (Appendix A) placed in the community, at organizations, and on social media.

### **Instruments**

#### ***Parent-Adolescent Communication Scale (PACS)***

The Parent-Adolescent Communication Scale (Barnes & Olson, 1985) is composed of two subscales: one that measures the degree of openness in family communication, and the second measures the extent of problems in family communication. Each subscale is comprised of ten items. Respondents indicated how much they agreed with each item on a five-point Likert-Type scale; a high score suggests that there were no issues with communication. The alpha reliability for each subscale is high ( $\alpha = .87$  and  $\alpha = .78$ ). Moreover, this scale has been found to

have strong test-retest reliability, with  $r = .78$  for the openness scale and  $r = .77$  for the problems scale in one study (Barnes & Olson, 1985).

### ***The Emotion Expression Scale for Children (EESC)***

The Emotional Expression Scale for Children (EESC – Penza-Clyve & Zeman, 2002) is a 16-item five-point Likert-type self-report questionnaire measure that aims to investigate two facets of inadequate emotion expression: inadequate awareness of feelings and insufficient drive to convey unpleasant emotions. Self-report measures of emotion regulation and self-and peer-report measures of internalizing and externalizing symptoms were used to evaluate the validity of the data. Reliability analyses utilizing a community sample of 208 students in the fourth and fifth grades showed that the EESC had a high internal consistency ( $\alpha = .81-.83$ ) and moderate test-retest reliability within a two-week period ( $r = 0.56$  to  $0.59$ ; Penza-Clyve & Zeman, 2002).

### **Materials:**

Participants in the experimental group were provided with one sheet of 12 in. X 18 in. (30.48 cm x 45.72 cm) Richeson® watercolor paper per dyad. Prior to commencing the art-making process, participants completed assessments using the Parent-Adolescent Communication Scale (PACS) and the Emotional Expression Scale for Children (EESC), measuring factors such as Degree of Openness, Extent of Problems, Poor Awareness, and Expressive Reluctance.

Participants in the control group received identical art materials as those in the experimental group, but each participant received one 12 in. X 18 in. (30.48 cm x 45.72 cm) Richeson® watercolor paper. Similar to the experimental group, they also completed pre-assessments using the PACS and EESC scales. Additionally, each participant received one set of

Pelikan® gouache paint (set of 12), one #2 pencil, and a paintbrush set comprising flat, round, filbert, and angle brushes.

**Procedure:**

Participants were randomly assigned to either the experimental or control group. The initial pair was assigned to a condition through a coin toss, while subsequent pairs were allocated to alternating conditions. The experimental group engaged in the Joint Painting Procedure (JPP); a structured five-step process aimed at fostering communication through collaborative art creation. The JPP involved marking personal space, painting individually, connecting frames, and collaborating on the remaining paper. The control group underwent a similar art process individually. The control group activity was designed to mirror the time frame of the JPP but emphasized parallel art making without interaction between participants. Participant dyads were welcomed on the scheduled session day and provided with informed consent (Appendix B), and child assent forms (Appendix C), which were provided in both English and Spanish. Mothers were provided with a demographic Questionnaire (Appendix F). They were also given an art release form to sign (Appendix E), all forms were available in English and Spanish. Participants were provided with copies of the consent forms and an image release for their record.

Prior to art making, all participants were provided with the pre-PACS (The Parent-Adolescent Communication) and pre-EESC (Emotional Expression Scale for Children). Next, they were given a demonstration on how to apply and use the paint. The experimental group engaged in The Five-Step Structured Process for Joint Painting Procedure (JPP – Gavron, 2013) (1) using a pencil and a shared sheet of paper, a parent and youngster were instructed to mark a personal space in the first stage, (2) each pair used gouache paint inside their own personal space, (3) the pair were instructed to paint a path from the painted space to their partner's painted

frame by drawing a frame around it, and (5) the child and parent were instructed to paint the remaining portion of the paper jointly. The control group underwent a similar art process individually. The control group activity was designed to mirror the time frame of the JPP but emphasized parallel art making without interaction between participants. Following the art sessions, post-PACS and post-EESC were administered. Finally, participants were debriefed and provided with a debriefing form (Appendix D). Consent, art release, and assent forms were securely stored separately from survey forms.

### **Results**

A paired samples t-test was conducted to assess the change in Degree of Openness, Extent of Problems, Poor Awareness, and Expressive Reluctance measured by the pre-PACS (Parent-Adolescent Communication Scale) and pre-EESC (Emotional Expression Scale for Children) from pre to post-intervention for both the Joint Painting Procedure and the control group. No significant decrease was found for Joint Painting Procedure group for Poor Awareness,  $t(7) = -.668$ , Cohen's  $d = -.236$ , and Expressive Reluctance,  $t(7) = .622$ , Cohen's  $d = -.210$ . In addition a significant increase was not found for Degree of Openness,  $t(7) = -1.51$ , Cohen's  $d = -.533$ . Of note, a significant increase was found for Extent of Problems  $t(7) = -3.39$ ,  $p < .01$ , Cohen's  $d = -1.2$ . While not significant, a moderate effect for an increase in Degree of Openness was found.

For the control group no significant decrease was found for Poor Awareness,  $t(5) = -1.66$ , Cohen's  $d = -.678$ , and Expressive Reluctance,  $t(5) = 2.15$ , Cohen's  $d = .878$ . A significant increase in Degree of Openness,  $t(5) = .139$ , Cohen's  $d = .057$ , was also not found. Of note, a significant increase was found for Extent of Problems  $t(5) = -6.17$ ,  $p < .001$ , Cohen's  $d = -2.52$



While not significant, a moderate effect was observed for a decrease in Expressive Reluctance and Degree of Openness.

A post hoc power analysis was conducted using G\*Power version 3.1.9.7 (Faul et al., 2007) for sample size estimation as a follow-up analysis, based on the nonsignificant findings. With a significance criterion of  $\alpha = .05$  and power = .80, the minimum sample size needed for an effect size of  $-.533$  is  $N = 27$  for a paired t-test. Thus, the obtained sample size of  $N = 14$  is likely not adequate to test the study hypothesis.

An independent t-test was conducted to see if there was a difference between the groups. No significance was found between the Joint Painting Group ( $M = -.875$ ,  $SD = 3.98$ ) and the control group ( $M = 2.3$ ,  $SD = 2.65$ ) for Expressive Reluctance,  $t(12) = -1.70$ , Cohen's  $d = -.919$ , the Joint Painting Group ( $M = -1.13$ ,  $SD = 4.76$ ) and the control group ( $M = -2.67$ ,  $SD = 3.93$ ) for Poor Awareness,  $t(12) = .642$ , Cohen's  $d = .347$ , the Joint Painting Group ( $M = -1.75$ ,  $SD = 3.28$ ) and the control group ( $M = .33$ ,  $SD = 5.89$ ) for Degree of Openness,  $t(12) = -.847$ , Cohen's  $d = -.458$ , and the Joint Painting Group ( $M = -4$ ,  $SD = 3.34$ ) and the control group ( $M = -5.83$ ,  $SD = 2.31$ ) for Extent of Problems,  $t(12) = 1.149$ , Cohen's  $d = .620$ .

## Discussion

The present study investigated the effectiveness of the Joint Painting Procedure (JPP) in improving communication and emotional expression among Latino mother-adolescent pairs. While there were compelling trends in the data, the results did not support the hypothesis. Pre- and post-intervention data showed no significant increase in communication openness or emotional expression among participants in the JPP group. Additionally, there was no significant difference between the experimental and control groups in terms of communication patterns and emotional expression. However, a statistically significant increase was found for the Extent of

Problems factor of the PACS as reported by parents after the artmaking in both the experimental and control groups. These results suggest that parent/child artmaking increased parental awareness of relational conflicts.

In reviewing the artwork, parent/child dyads working on one piece of paper together appeared to demonstrate a deeper exploration and expression of underlying concerns compared to dyads working on separate paper. These observations suggest that collaborative art interventions might support more honest communication and emotional expression in parent-child interactions, especially when dealing with the complicated dynamics of relational conflicts. The results of this research suggest a need for further exploration to develop tailored interventions aimed at addressing underlying issues in Latino families.

The results of this study are somewhat inconsistent with results from existing literature on arts-based interventions and family communication dynamics (Gavron & Mayseless, 2018). While previous research has shown positive outcomes for interventions like the JPP in enhancing communication and emotional expression (Gavron & Mayseless, 2018), this study did not find significant improvements in these areas among Latino families. Inconsistencies between this study and earlier research on the JPP may be related to several factors, including changes in study design, sample characteristics, and accuracy of intervention delivery. First, the small sample size limited the possibility of findings with significant effects. Second, self-reporting in the survey data may have introduced bias, as communication can be difficult to accurately assess through self-report alone (Barnes & Olson, 1985). The effectiveness of the intervention may also have been influenced by differences in how participants acculturated and communicated, which vary based on cultural background as described by Zambrana (1995). Cultural factors specific to Latino families, including potential mistrust of research institutions, collectivism, which

emphasizes family unity over individual expression, and traditional gender roles, may have influenced the intervention's effectiveness for this sample (Fischer et al., 2017; Zambrana, 1995). Future research should address these limitations by using larger, more diverse samples, and perhaps incorporating observational measures of communication alongside self-reported data (Barnes & Olson, 1985), and explicitly considering cultural factors in intervention design and implementation.

The artwork produced by participants in both the control and experimental groups offers valuable insights into their emotional dynamics and communication patterns within the parent-child relationship. Gavron (2013) emphasizes the significance of art-based interventions, such as the Joint Painting Procedure (JPP), in facilitating nonverbal expressiveness and strengthening parent-child relationships. Indeed, the noted cohesion and integration evidenced in the artwork align with Gavron's (2013) observations regarding the ability of the JPP to promote engagement and connection between parents and children. Additionally, trends in gender differences were observed in the artwork, with boys exhibiting more saturated colors (Figure 1) and girls incorporating nature-based imagery (Figure 2), which resonates with Zambrana's (1995) findings regarding differences in gender roles and communication patterns within Latino families.

Of note, mothers of boys in the experimental group were observed to show increased curiosity about their sons' artwork, with one mother, for example, noting her son's use of saturated colors and heavy black lines to indicate boundaries and personal space in their painting (see Figure 1). This observation may suggest several things. Firstly, the heightened curiosity could indicate a deeper interest or investment in understanding their sons' emotional and cognitive processes expressed through art. The use of saturated colors and strong black lines around the areas of individual space might reflect an emotional intensity and need for personal

boundaries within the mother-son relationship. Additionally, these artistic choices could signify an attempt by the boys to assert their individuality and autonomy within the family system. These observations align with Gavron's (2013) belief that the Joint Painting Procedure can facilitate parent-child engagement and open communication and that art-making can serve as a valuable medium for exploring and strengthening familial relationships.

Another noted trend in the artwork was the presence of empty space and agitated line quality in the artwork of girls in the experimental group, which may also suggest a need for personal and emotional space in the parent/child relationship. This trend echoes Gavron and Mayseless's (2018) discussion of the JPP's ability to provide a platform for the direct expression of complicated emotions. It may reflect a conflict between the desire for closeness and the simultaneous need for personal space within the mother-daughter relationship. The agitated lines could signify inner turmoil or tension, while the empty space might represent a need for emotional distance or autonomy. Overall, these artistic expressions point to the intricate and sometimes conflicting emotions inherent in parent-child relationships.

In summary, this study provides valuable insight into the potential effectiveness of the Joint Painting Procedure (JPP) in understanding and enhancing communication and emotional expression within Latino mother-adolescent pairs. The insights drawn from the artwork, complemented by self-report data, support the complementary nature of quantitative and qualitative methods in intervention evaluation (Faul et al., 2007; Gavron & Mayseless, 2018; Zambrana, 1995). The observed gender differences in artwork composition, along with the varied responses of mothers to their children's artwork, underscore the influence of cultural and gender dynamics on communication patterns. Future research into art interventions informed by

cultural context will aid clinicians in developing more culturally sensitive interventions that enhance family communication and emotional well-being within Latino families.

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Figure 1



Figure 1 presents collaborative artwork by a male adolescent (aged 15-17) and a Latina mother (aged 35-44) from the experimental group. They used gouache paint, employing saturated colors and black to delineate boundaries and personal space.



Figure 2 showcases artwork from the control group, depicting female adolescent (aged 12-14) and Latina mother (aged 25-34), characterized by an abundance of nature imagery, and created using gouache paint.



## Appendix A

### Recruitment Flyer

# Are you a Latina mother with a child between the ages of 12-17

We are looking for Latina mothers and their  
children for a research study exploring  
mother and child relationships



## What is involved?

Questionnaires and art-making

The study will take approximately 45min

**NO ART EXPERIENCE REQUIRED**

To participate contact:

Stephanie Herrera

MAATC graduate student

[snherrera@albertus.edu](mailto:snherrera@albertus.edu)



*Albertus Magnus College*

*Masters of Arts in Art Therapy and Counseling*

## **Appendix B**

### **Parental Informed Consent form**

This study is being conducted as part of the requirements for the Master of Arts in Art Therapy and Counseling degree at Albertus Magnus College. The main goal of this research is to investigate the effects of art-making with mothers and their adolescents. To qualify for this study, you must identify as being Latina and a mother of a child between the ages of 12-17. During this study, you will be asked to make art together with your child, in addition to completing consent forms, a demographic questionnaire, and a set of surveys pertaining to the study's objectives.

Please note that your art-making abilities are not a factor in this study. All information collected will be confidential. To maintain confidentiality, the artwork created and your answers on the survey during this study will be numbered, and your name and your adolescent's name, will not be connected to the work in any way. You will be told in more detail at the end of this participation session about the purpose of the research.

The researcher does not anticipate any major risks associated with participation in this study for either you or your adolescent. Some potential risks may include frustration with or negative feelings from the art-making process or survey questions. The benefits of participating include potentially enjoying the art activities, which can provide a creative and relaxing outlet for self-expression and exploration.

Participation in this study is completely voluntary, and you and your adolescent are able to withdraw at any point without penalty. This study has been approved by the Albertus Magnus College Institutional Review Board (IRB).

Please inform the researcher if you, or your adolescent, have any known allergies to art materials. If you have any questions or concerns about this research, you may contact the following individuals:

Investigator

Stephanie Herrera (snherrera@albertus.edu)

Thesis Advisors

Lisa Furman (Lfurman@albertus.edu)

Bonnie Pepper (bpepper@albertus.edu)

Institutional Review Board contact: [IRB@albertus.edu](mailto:IRB@albertus.edu)

By signing this form:

- ☐ I acknowledge that I am 18 years of age or older.
- ☐ I identify as being a Latina mother of a child between the ages of 12-17
- ☐ I understand the study described above.
- ☐ I had any questions addressed, and
- ☐ I agree for my child and I to participate.

Print name \_\_\_\_\_

Signature \_\_\_\_\_ Date \_\_\_\_\_

- ☐ I have received a copy of this form to keep for myself.

## **Appendix C**

### **Assent Form for Minors**

We invite you to be a part of our research project! This study is part of the requirements for the Master of Arts in Art Therapy and Counseling degree at Albertus Magnus College. The goal is to explore how making art together might affect how moms and adolescents communicate and express their feelings.

If you decide to participate, you and your mom will create art together, and you'll also fill out some forms and answer some questions about the art and your feelings. Your mom is here too because we want to understand how making art together might bring you both closer.

To join, your mom needs to identify as Latina, and you need to be between 12-17 years old. During the study, you'll make art with your mom and answer a few questions. Everything you do in the study is private. Your mom and your names won't be connected to the art or the answers you give.

We don't expect anything bad to happen, but you might feel frustrated or have feelings during the art or the questions. On the bright side, you're helping a student finish her studies, and you might enjoy the art!

You don't have to join if you don't want to. You can also leave at any time if you feel uncomfortable.



Contact Information:

Investigator: Stephanie Herrera (snherrera@albertus.edu)

Thesis Advisors:

Lisa Furman (Lfurman@albertus.edu)

Bonnie Pepper (bpepper@albertus.edu)

Institutional Review Board: IRB@albertus.edu

Allergies: Tell us if you or your mom are allergic to any art materials.

Questions: If you have any questions or worries, just ask Stephanie Herrera or the IRB.

Assent: I have read this paper, and I agree to be in the study.

Participant's Name (Print): \_\_\_\_\_

Participant's Signature: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_

Parent/Guardian Consent:

I, the undersigned, have read and understand the information provided, and I give my permission for my child to participate in the research study described above.

Parent/Guardian Name (Print): \_\_\_\_\_

Parent/Guardian Signature: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_

## **Appendix D**

### **Debriefing Form**

Thank you for taking part in this research project. Our major goal was to investigate the potential benefits of the Joint Painting Procedure (JPP) as an innovative and creative intervention in the context of Latino families. We wanted to know if this innovative approach to art-based therapy could considerably improve communication dynamics and emotional expression among family members, resulting in healthier relationships.

Participants were randomly assigned to either the experimental group or the control group. This randomization was done using a computer-generated algorithm to ensure an unbiased group assignment.

Participants in the experimental group engaged in the Joint Painting Procedure (JPP). This structured, five-step process is designed to foster communication through collaborative art creation. The JPP's five stages are as follows: In the first stage, a parent and youth are invited to mark a personal space on a shared piece of paper with a pencil. Then, using gouache paints, each person paints inside his or her personal space. This is followed by a directive to draw a frame around the painted space and then paint a path from that frame to the partner's frame. The parent and youth are then instructed to paint the rest of the paper together in the fifth and final stage. Following the painting, the parent and child discuss the picture with the therapist and give it a title (Gavron, 2013).

Participants in the control group also participated in an art creation process. However, unlike the experimental group, they worked separately on their own individual papers, engaging in a similar art process but without collaborative elements.

When compared to a control group that did not participate in this intervention, we hypothesize that implementing the Joint Painting Procedure (JPP) will result in a significant improvement in communication and emotional expression among Latina mothers and their adolescents, resulting in stronger familial bonds and a deeper understanding of each other's emotions and thoughts.

The risks in this investigation are relatively small. A majority of participants do appreciate art-making activities. However, some people may be slightly frustrated by the art materials or the art-making process. Most participants enjoy answering questions about themselves; nevertheless, some individuals may have slight negative reactions in response to some of the questions posed in the survey.

If you have experienced anything beyond a mild, transitory negative response, please feel free to discuss these feelings with the researcher.

If you need more support beyond that, please contact one of the community mental health services:

**Cornell Scott – Hill Health Center Dixwell at (203) 503-3000**  
**Connecticut Mental Health Center at (203) 974-7300**  
**Wheeler Health - Waterbury Family Health & Wellness Center at 860-793-3500**

If you are a student at Albertus Magnus College, you may contact the Albertus Magnus College Counseling Center at (203) 773-8149 or [counseling@albertus.edu](mailto:counseling@albertus.edu)

If you would like to know the results of this study, please provide your email address to the researcher. Please note that results can only be provided in aggregate.

If you would like to learn more about art therapy, please visit the American Art Therapy Association at [www.arttherapy.org](http://www.arttherapy.org)

For more information about the Joint Painting Procedure:

Gavron, T. (2013). Meeting on common ground: Assessing parent–child relationships through the Joint Painting procedure. *Art Therapy*, 30(1), 12–19.

<https://doi.org/10.1080/07421656.2013.757508>

Gavron, T., & Mayseless, O. (2018). Creating art together as a transformative process in parent-child relations: The therapeutic aspects of the joint painting procedure. *Frontiers in Psychology*, 9. <https://doi.org/10.3389/fpsyg.2018.02154>

## **Appendix E**

### **Image Release Form**

You are being asked to allow the investigator of this research study to photograph you and your child's artwork.

Please note that the photographs of your artwork will remain confidential. Your name, or your child's name, will not be connected with your artwork, and photographs of the artwork will not include any identifying information. Photographs of the artwork will only be taken with your consent and used beyond this research for the purposes listed below.

Please indicate your agreement to have your artwork photographed without identifying information for the following purpose(s): (Please check all that apply.)

- ☐ For educational and training purposes
- ☐ Presentation at a professional conference
- ☐ Publication in a professional journal
- ☐ I DONOT agree to share images of my artwork beyond the research study for the above purposes.

**I hereby give consent, as noted above, for the use of my photographed artwork.**

Name (print): \_\_\_\_\_

Signature: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_

Please note that once images have been disseminated for publication or in a presentation setting, they may be difficult or impossible to recover should you change your mind.

I received a copy of this form for my records.

## **Appendix F**

### **Demographic Form**

**1. How old is the Latina mother?**

- 18-24
- 25-34
- 35-44
- 45-54
- 55 and above

**2. What is the age of the child participating in the study?**

- 12-14
- 15-17

**3. What is the gender identity of the Latina mother?**

- Female
- Male
- Non-binary
- Prefer not to say
- Self describe: \_\_\_\_\_

**4. What is the gender identity of the child participating in the study?**

- Female
- Male
- Non-binary
- Prefer not to say
- Self describe: \_\_\_\_\_

**5. How would you describe the family structure?**

- Nuclear family (parents and children only)
- Extended family (parents, children, and other relatives)
- Blended family (parents, children, and stepfamily members)
- Other (please specify)

**6. How do you racially identify? (Select all that apply)**

- Latina/Hispanic
- White
- Black/African American
- Native American/Alaskan Native
- Asian
- Pacific Islander
- Other (please specify)

**7. How would you describe your ethnic background?**

- Mexican
- Puerto Rican
- Cuban
- Dominican
- Central American (e.g., Guatemalan, Salvadoran)
- South American (e.g., Colombian, Peruvian)
- Other (please specify) \_\_\_\_\_

**8. What is the primary language spoken at home?**

- English
- Spanish
- Bilingual (English and Spanish)
- Other (please specify) \_\_\_\_\_

**9. What is the highest level of education completed by the Latina mother?**

- Less than high school
- High school graduate
- Some college or vocational training
- Bachelor's degree
- Graduate or professional degree

**10. How many children do you have?**

- 1
- 2
- 3
- 4
- 5 or more

**11. What is the birth order of the child participating in the study?**

- First-born
- Second-born
- Third-born
- Fourth-born
- Fifth-born or later

**12. Have you or your child had any prior experience with art or artistic activities?**

- Yes
- No